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Message Text

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12
ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-10

NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-15 TRSE-00 SAJ-01

DODE-00 /073 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/RPM:EDNEWSOM
APPROVED BY EUR:JAARMITAGE
EUR/RPM:WTSHINN
PM/DCA:EIFFT
S/PRS:JTRATTNER (PHONE)
C:LFUERTH
S/S: JLHOGANSON
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R 070541Z AUG 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION NATO
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

UNCLAS STATE 196618

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PARM, UR, NATO

SUBJECT: PRESS Q AND A'S ON SOVIET NUCLEAR EXPLOSION

FOLLOWING ARE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON SOVIET NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS TAKEN AT DEPARTMENT OF STATE DAILY BRIEFING AUGUST 5:

Q. WHAT ARE THE DATA EXCHANGE PROVISIONS THAT WE HAVE WITH THE SOVIET UNION CONCERNING UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS?

A. THESE ARE RATHER COMPLICATED, BUT THEY ARE AVAILABLE IN THE PUBLIC RECORD. I WILL CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO THE PROTOCOLS TO THE TTB TREATY AND THE PNE TREATY (ACDA PUBLICATION 87 WHICH PROVIDE THEM IN DETAIL.)
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Q. DID THE USSR AGREE FORMALLY OR OTHERWISE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO TESTING ABOVE 150 KILOTONS BEFORE THE TREATY WENT INTO FORCE?

A. THERE WAS NO FORMAL AGREEMENT. THE 150 KT LIMIT IN THE TTB TREATY WAS INTENDED TO COME INTO EFFECT ON MARCH 31 OF THIS YEAR. WE HAD NOT COMPLETED THE PNE NEGOTIATIONS BY THAT DATE, WHICH WE SPECIFIED AS AN ESSENTIAL CONDITION PRIOR TO HAVING THE TTB TREATY TAKE EFFECT. HOWEVER, THE

TWO SIDES SEPARATELY ISSUED PUBLIC STATEMENTS--THE US ON MARCH 31, THE SOVIET UNION ON APRIL 1--AS FOLLOWS:

-- US. FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, WE HAVE NO PLANS
-- FOR HIGH YIELD WEAPONS TESTS ABOVE THE
-- THRESHOLD OF 150 KILOTONS.

-- USSR. ...THE SOVIET UNION DOES NOT INTEND TO
-- TAKE ANY ACTIONS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE
-- PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY, ON THE UNDER-
-- STANDING THAT THE US WILL ACT IN THE SAME
-- WAY.

Q. WHAT WOULD BE THE BASIS OF CONSULTATIONS IF THERE HAD BEEN NO AGREEMENT ON THE ABOVE?

A. THERE IS ALWAYS A BASIS FOR CONSULTATIONS ON MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST--PARTICULARLY IN A SITUATION SUCH AS THIS, WHERE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEEN UNDERWAY.

Q. HAS SECRETARY KISSINGER NOTIFIED CONGRESS OF THESE "VIOLATIONS?"

A. APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF THE CONGRESS AND STAFFS HAVE RECEIVED CLASSIFIED BRIEFINGS ON THESE MATTERS. HOWEVER, INASMUCH AS WE HAVE NOT YET COMPLETED OUR DATA ANALYSES, WE ARE NOT YET IN A POSITION TO SAY WITH ANY DEGREE OF CONFIDENCE INTO WHAT YIELD RANGES THESE SHOTS FALL. ADDITIONALLY, AS I POINTED OUT YESTERDAY, THERE IS NO LEGALLY BINDING COMMITMENT PRIOR TO ENTRY INTO FORCE
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OF THE TREATY, AND THEREFORE IN THIS LEGAL SENSE IT WOULD NOT BE A VIOLATION.

Q. HAVE WE ASKED THE SOVIETS THE SIZE OF THEIR TWO MOST RECENT EXPLOSIONS?

A. NO.

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Q. HAS THERE BEEN A PAST HISTORY OF PRECISE ESTIMATES
OF BLAST SIZE?

A. ESTIMATES ARE THE RESULT OF A VERY COMPLEX PROCESS.
WE DO NOT EXPRESS YIELDS IN PRECISE VALUES. (REFER TO
ERDA FOR ANY FURTHER TECHNICAL ELABORATION.)

Q. IS THE QUESTION OF THESE TWO MOST RECENT TESTS BEING
HANDLED DIFFERENTLY FROM PAST TESTS FOR POLITICAL REASONS?

A. NO. SUCH MATTERS ARE HANDLED WITH REFERENCE TO FOREIGN
POLICY AND THE NATIONAL INTEREST. HABIB

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS CONFERENCES, NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE196618
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EDNEWSOM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760305-0054
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760875/aaaacnge.tel
Line Count: 127
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 APR 2004 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <06 JAN 2005 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS Q AND A'S ON SOVIET NUCLEAR EXPLOSION FOLLOWING ARE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON SOVIET NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS TAKEN AT DEPARTMENT OF STATE DAILY BRI
TAGS: PARM, UR, US, NATO
To: NATO BRUSSELS
Type: TE
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